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## OPEN LETTERS.

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### WEBB'S "STUDY OF SPIRAEA."

IN the June number of the BOTANICAL GAZETTE there appeared a paper by Mr. J. E. Webb under the title "A morphological study of the flower and embryo of Spiraea." In looking through it I noticed that the illustrations of the sections of the flowers represented obdiplostemonous flowers with but two carpels and a simple raceme, all characters which do not agree with the true Spiraeas. It became apparent, therefore, that the paper did not deal with *Spiraea japonica* Linn. f., but with *Astilbe japonica* Gray (*Hoteia japonica* Morr. and Decne. *Spiraea japonica* Hort.), an herbaceous plant belonging to the Saxifragaceae. Unfortunately it does not happen infrequently that morphological and physiological researches are based on wrongly named plants. Of numerous similar instances I shall mention here only one I came across a few days ago in the *Botanische Zeitung* (47 : 629. 1889), where a paper by J. H. Wakker on "Bau und Dickenwachsthum von *Abrus precatorius*" is published. The figure on the plate of a flattened stem and the mention in the text of "der Gattung Phaseolus ähnliche Blätter" left little doubt that the plant under consideration was not *Abrus precatorius* but *Rhynchosia phaseoloides*, which is sometimes confounded with the former on account of the similarity of the seeds. The article was reviewed in Just's *Botanischer Jahresberichte* without the error being noticed. As also in the present case Webb's paper has been mentioned in other journals without attention being drawn to the misleading names, I thought it advisable to point out that the paper chiefly deals with *Astilbe*, and thus refers mainly to Saxifragaceae, and the *Spiraea japonica* there cited should be changed to *Astilbe japonica* Gray, and the *Spiraea astilboides* to *Aruncus astilboides*, while *Spiraea salicifolia*, with only one illustration, will remain as the correct name.—ALFRED REHDER, *Arnold Arboretum*.